Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A <u>computer implemented</u> method for carrying out a bartering system over a network, <u>the computer implemented method</u> comprising:

receiving a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire <u>from a requesting computer system, by a first bartering system on a first computer system</u>;

receiving a priority indication for the at least one needed item, wherein the priority indication indicates a level of desire the user has in acquiring the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates items that are equivalent to the at least one needed item;

<u>receiving a specification of a range of near equivalency among non-identical barter items;</u>

<u>searching available items within the first bartering system using a first protocol language associated with the first bartering system;</u>

<u>responsive to a failure to find a match in the available items with the at least one needed item within the first bartering system on the first computer system, searching a second bartering system on a second computer system over a network, wherein the second bartering system uses a second bartering protocol language that is different than the first protocol language, and wherein searching the second bartering system further comprises:</u>

<u>constructing a representation of the needs list in the first protocol language to a common representation of the needs list to form a barter protocol language representation of the needs list, wherein the bartering protocol language enables a bartering process to be compatible across multiple different bartering systems;</u>

<u>searching available items within the second bartering system using the barter protocol language representation of the needs list; and</u>

<u>responsive to finding a match in the available items for the at least one needed item, displaying match results to the user, wherein the match results comprises equivalent and near equivalent items matched with the at least one needed item based on the priority indication for the at least one needed item and the specification of the range of near equivalency among non-identical barter items;</u>

responsive to a failure to find a match in the available items within the second bartering protocol system, searching available items in a third bartering system over the network using the barter protocol language representation of the needs list

~~constructing the needs list with the priority indication into a barter protocol language; and~~

~~searching available items for a match with each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority indication wherein an item having a lower priority indication is matched as being~~

2.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the bartering protocol language specifies [[a]] the range of near equivalency associated with a plurality of dissimilar items to form near equivalent items, wherein the near equivalent items are items that are dissimilar to the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates whether a near equivalent item will be satisfactory to the user in lieu of the at least one needed item.

3.   (Cancelled)

4.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim[[3]] 1 further comprising:
        receiving an availability list from the user, wherein the availability list specifies items the user is willing to make available to others for barter; and
        constructing a barter protocol language representation of the availability list; and
        searching needs lists of others to determine if an item on another needs list matches an item on the availability list from the user ~~wherein the first bartering system associated with a first barter protocol language and wherein the different bartering system associated with a second barter protocol language and further comprising:~~
~~translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needs list from the first barter protocol language to a common barter protocol language, wherein the common barter protocol language comprises a representation of the needs list and an availability list that is common to both the first bartering system and the different bartering system.~~

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the needs list further comprises ~~a range of near equivalent items with each near equivalent item having~~ an associated priority

indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given needed item is not found.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein [[the]] a match in the match results is a direct match having a one to one correspondence.

7.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein[[the]] a match in the match results is a chained association involving the needs list and availability lists of a plurality of users.

8.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[3]] 1 wherein the first bartering system associated with a first barter protocol language and wherein the different bartering system associated with a second barter protocol language and further comprising:

        translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needs list from the first barter protocol language to the second barter protocol language to form the barter protocol language.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 1 further comprising receiving a second priority indication for a given available item on the availability list from the user indicating a user's desire of the user to use the given available item to carry out a bartering transaction.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the second priority indication is indicated by a monetary value that the user is willing to accept for the given available item.

11.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving a monetary value associated with each of the at least one needed item.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a payment value for a given needed item from the monetary value.

13.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 4 further comprising receiving monetary value associated with each of the at least one available item.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a received value for a given available item from the monetary value.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the monetary value is received from data provided by a rating agency.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
   receiving a priority indication for a group of two or more items.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the barter protocol language is in XML.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein each of the at least one needed item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein each physical item and each nonphysical item has a corresponding representation mechanism within the barter protocol language.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the nonphysical item represents a needed service.

21. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein each of the at least one available item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the nonphysical item represents an available service.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 1 further comprising indicating equivalency of at least one available item with at least one needed item.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 1 further comprising finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed

item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

25.-41. (Cancelled)

42.   (New) A computer implemented method for carrying out a bartering system over a network, the computer implemented method comprising:

receiving a needs list from a requesting computer system, by a first bartering system on a first computer system, wherein the needs list comprises at least one needed item a user desires to acquire;

receiving an availability list having at least one item the user desires to use for barter from the requesting computer system;

receiving a first priority indication for each item in the needs list, wherein the first priority indication indicates a level of desire the user has in acquiring the each item in the needs list, and wherein the first priority indication indicates items that are equivalent and near-equivalent to the at least one needed item, based on a specification of a range of near equivalency, wherein the range of near equivalency specifies near equivalency among dissimilar barter items, and wherein a near equivalent item is an item that is dissimilar to the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates whether the near equivalent item is acceptable to the user in lieu of the at least one needed item;

receiving a second priority indication for each item in the availability list from the user, wherein the second priority indicates a level of desire the user has in using the each item in the availability list for barter;

searching, by the first bartering system, available items within the first bartering system using a first protocol language associated with the first bartering system;

responsive to a failure to find a match in the available items with the at least one needed item within the first bartering system, searching a second bartering system on a second computer system over a network, wherein the second bartering system uses a second bartering protocol language that is different than the first protocol language, and wherein searching the second bartering system further comprises:

constructing a representation of the needs list and the availability list in the first protocol language to a common representation of the needs list to form a barter protocol language representation of the needs list, wherein the bartering protocol language enables a bartering process to be compatible across multiple different bartering systems;

searching available items within the second bartering system using the barter protocol language representation of the needs list based on the first priority indication and searching needs lists of others based on the second priority indication to determine if an item on another needs list matches an item on the availability list from the user, wherein a lower priority item is matched in response to a failure to find a match with a higher priority match; and

responsive to finding a match in the available items within the second bartering system for the at least one needed item, displaying match results to the user, wherein the match results comprises equivalent and near equivalent items matched with the at least one needed item based on the priority indication for the at least one needed item and the specification of the range of near equivalency among non-identical barter items; and

responsive to a failure to find a match in the available items within the second bartering protocol system, searching available items in a third bartering system on a third computer system over the network using the barter protocol language representation of the needs list.